

# **Implementation Sub-Committee Of The Task Force on Federal Legislation Of the Children's Cabinet**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**May 6, 2005**

**Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.**

**1. The 4/1/05 minutes were reviewed and approved as written.**

### **2. FIP/TANF Data Reports – Randy Rosati**

**As of March 2005 there were 12,860 FIP family cases, which was down 65 cases from the previous month. Single parent cases continue to decline, two parent cases remained the same while child only cases continued to edge upward. Of the 4067 child only cases 1321 were families whose cases had reached the five year time limit. Five hundred and fifty nine cases closed and 277 of these cases closed due to employment. Of the whole caseload 12.7% were employed or 18.8% of the adult cases were employed. The average monthly cash benefit was \$423.69 for a regular case and \$489.54 for two parent family cases. The number, 5894, of exempt cases is down 197 cases from the previous month. The FIP teen heads of households remains stable at 627 cases with 54 of these cases headed by a teen under age 18. Although the Rhode Island unemployment rate is lower than the US rate, the RI rate is moving up**

while the US rate is moving down. The number of child care cases using the child care disregard continues to decline. There were 67 cases this February as opposed to 112 in February of last year. Discontinuing the child care disregard is being considered. There is significant flexibility in the child care subsidy program and there is sense that scrutiny of child care choices is a good thing. Children are predominantly in center care. Thirty nine FIP participants have a domestic violence waiver of work requirements while 224 have a waiver of the child support requirements.

Randy then discussed TANF Trends, which, compares national, regional and local data, and trends.

There has been a 47% decline in TANF families in Rhode Island between 1994 and 2004. This is as compared to the national average decline of 61% in the same period. Rhode Island experienced a 9.8% increase in the decline in number of TANF families. Rhode Island has the highest percent of its population receiving TANF in the New England region. Three percent of Rhode Island families receive TANF funds.

Randy has developed a new data report named Data Bytes. The data reflected in this first edition is for May 6, 2005. Twenty five percent of the family cases that had closed due to the full family sanction have reopened. In March 2005 51 cases closed due to time limits and of these 9 had income from earnings. From June 2002 through April 2005 2426 cases have closed as a result of reaching the time limit.

**About 54% of those cases remain on FIP as child only cases.**

### **3. Introduction And Overview Of New Supportive Employment And Transitional Jobs Providers**

#### **Ø West Bay Community Action Program**

**Jesse Lee Gannon of the West Bay Community Action Program presented first. He described the clients that are sent to them as very motivated. The participants are told that the program staff will stay with them and make sure that they are successful. There is a pre assessment and a one on one interview. Barriers are identified usually child care, transportation and housing are the big issues. The assessment identifies the participants' hard skills and their soft skills. The client then attends an orientation to the program. During a two week workshop an IEP is developed. If the participant lacks a GED or practical work experience they are referred to the transitional support program and if they have a good work history they are referred to the supported work program and receive a pay check. A job placement coach meets with the client weekly to assist them with job search. After they are employed the client begins to attend an evening workshop. The jobs placed so far include retail, medical, banking and insurance. Wages average \$9 to \$10 an hour. All the resources and services available at West Bay are made available to program participants.**

#### **Ø Tri Town Community Action Program**

**Julie from Tri Town Community Action Program reported second. Tri Town only provides the supportive employment program. The Tri Town program is similar to the West Bay Program. Counselors meet with participants wherever, at the client's home or elsewhere in the community. Employment opportunities are discussed and job referrals are made. Job search, interviewing skills and job etiquette are a few of the things discussed. A letter of congratulations is sent to the client when they obtain a job. There is follow up after employment to help the client retain the position. Tri Town is a full service agency and all services are made available to the client. Job placements include hospitals and banks with wages of \$9 and \$10 an hour.**

#### **Ø South Shore Mental Health Services**

**June Allen reported for South Shore Mental Health. They have a supportive work program. There are three staff members and the program is statewide. FIP clients with mental health issues are referred to this program. Participants are helped to apply for SSI if appropriate. Staff goes to the client's home in efforts to engage the client and services are provided on a one to one basis.**

#### **Ø Ser-Jobs For Progress**

**The program began very slowly with many who were referred not showing up for appointments. In addition about 50% of those referred were sent back. Some of those referred were employed or exempt. If the client did show the program was very successful in engaging the**

client. At present there are nine participants in the transitional jobs program and eleven in the supportive work program. The program works with clients with limited English capability and those who are illiterate in their own language. The program offers a three-week workshop. Clients are assisted with transportation, childcare, and the criminal justice system. Three clients are starting employment at wages between \$10 and \$12 an hour. Clients in transitional jobs program have been placed at non profit agencies such as Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army for 25 to 30 hours a week for \$6.75 an hour.

#### **Ø Urban League Of Rhode Island**

The Urban League program is similar to the other programs. There is a job readiness component and all agency services are available to participants.

Linda Katz expressed her appreciation for the Program presenters.

Linda provided a brief status report on the One Rhode Island bills being considered by the General Assembly, stating that there were indications that all of the One R.I. legislation would be passed some of the items, like Food Stamp Outreach looked favorable to some members and that members of the House Finance Committee were closely examining all of the bills affecting low income Rhode Islanders, with a spirit of protecting supports for those in need. However, no definitive information was available until the votes were

taken and the budget passed. She stated she hoped more information would be available for the next meeting.

Linda also noted that TANF Reauthorized seemed to be in limbo at this time, thus no information could be reported on the federal bills.

The meeting adjourned at 11 AM and the next meeting is scheduled for 9AM on June 3, 2005.